

LANGSTON HUGHES AND HIS POETRY

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ABSTRACT : *This article discusses the circulation of, and commentary on, Langston Hughes's poems in rural publications during the 1920s and 1930s. It uses the journal of a black Catholic agricultural and industrial high school in rural Maryland, the Cardinal's Notebook, co-edited by Tuskegee alumna Constance Daniel, as a case study to explore how Hughes's thematically urban poems were recast in important ways by the editorial practices of rural publishers. Russ Castronovo argues persuasively that writers such as W. E. B. Du Bois conveyed complex meanings through the editorial juxtaposition of materials in Harlem Renaissance journals such as the Crisis: that the meaning of particular poems, essays, and images was in part created through context. Similarly, this article contends that the rural journals that reprinted urban creative works during the Harlem Renaissance often did so in ways that suggested distinctive thematic emphases and meanings.*

Key words : *Langston Hughes, poetry, rural life, literary reuse, Harlem Renaissance*

INTRODUCTION: In Langston Hughes's landmark essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," first published in *The Nation* in 1926, he writes, "An artist must be free to choose what he does, certainly, but he must also never be afraid to do what he must choose." Freedom of creative expression, whether personal or collective, is one of the many legacies of Hughes, who has been called "the architect" of the Black poetic tradition. He is certainly one of the world's most universally beloved poets, read by children and teachers, scholars and poets,

musicians and historians. Langston Hughes became the voice of Black America in the 1920s, when his first published poems brought him more than moderate success. Throughout his lifetime, his work encompassed both popular lyrical poems, and more controversial political work, especially during the thirties. He expressed a direct and sometimes even pessimistic approach to race relations, and he focused his poems primarily on the lives of the working class. When he writes that an artist must be unafraid, in “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” he is not only defending the need for his own work, but calling forth the next generation of poets, not only giving them permission to write about race, but charging them with the responsibility of writing about race. He writes, in the same essay, “I am ashamed for the black poet who says, ‘I want to be a poet, not a Negro poet,’ as though his own racial world were not as interesting as any other world.” For Hughes, who wrote honestly about the world into which he was born, it was impossible to turn away from the subject of race, which permeated every aspect of his life, writing, public reception and reputation. That said, his subject matter was extraordinarily varied and rich: his poems are about music, politics, America, love, the blues, and dreams. No list could be inclusive enough. Hughes wrote poems about ordinary people leading ordinary lives, and about a world that few could rightly call beautiful, but that was worth loving and changing. Unfortunately, as with many of our great American poets (Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost), the variety and challenging nature of his work has been reduced in the public mind through the repeated anthologizing of his least political, most accessible work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION : Considering Hughes as a former Afro-American writer, this section aims at applying Gates’ notion of Signifying to *The Bluest Eye* so as to highlight the instances in the novel where one can see Morrison Signifying on Hughes poetry. The oral and improvisatory qualities of the Afro-American culture, on the other hand, whose significant influence on the blues and jazz is indisputable, are also going to be dealt with in the discussion. “Quiet as it’s kept, there were no marigolds in the fall 1941” (1994, p. 5). Thus

begins the prelude to the first chapter of *The Bluest Eye*; “our seeds were not the only ones that did not sprout;” the narrator continues, “nobody’s did.” Through these very beginning sentences, or rather whispers, the reader comes to perceive that the speaker is going to give away a secret, to unfold an enigma, and to pour out her heart to the reader. Morrison’s rather meticulous choice of the phrase, “quiet as it’s kept,” leads the reader to acknowledge that the secret is not an ordinary one; to cite Agnes Suranyi (2007), this “often overheard” phrase in “women’s intimate gossip . . . suggests that it is a story to be told and withheld at the same time, a story of incest, of blame, of loss” (as cited in Tally, p. 14). In 1920, Langston Hughes was made a beeline for see his dad in Mexico via train. As he was riding in along the Mississippi River, "the expression came to him, at that point a sentence. Drawing an envelope from his pocket, he started to write. Shortly Langston had completed a poet, the title "The Negro Speaks of the Rivers" tells us right off the bat that the accompanying story is told from the viewpoint of an individual from the dark community. The author starts recounting the narrative of the origination of each human progress by taking us to the Euphrates, however finishes all at once and place connected to the historical backdrop of servitude and bigotry in America: When Abe Lincoln rode a boat down the Mississippi, you observer interestingly the detestations of bondage. Our speaker watches the "muddy" Mississippi River turn "Golden" in the light of the dusk, demonstrating the shift from subjugation to the opportunity that numerous Americans lived after the Civil War. The African American population is commended thusly, In "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," as our speaker outlines the legacy of dark Americans, starting with the support of development in the Middle East and finishing with references to subjugation as seen from the Mississippi River, he follows more than 4,000 years of history. He discloses to us that because of all that he has seen, heard, done, and saw, his spirit has developed "profound as streams." Rivers have stood the trial of time and convey a mind boggling insight accordingly. Hughes draws an association between the waterways and the African American population, which has persevered through a lot and conveys a similarly significant

and incredible wisdom, on our excursion through time in "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "our speaker starts with the support of progress on the banks of the Euphrates River. Next he stops by the Congo River bowl where we are calmed by the lapping waters (and are helped to remember the speculation that people started in Africa), and heads toward Egypt where we join different laborers (maybe constrained into working) in building the pyramids. Ultimately, he closes the visit at the Mississippi River, the core of subjection in America. The excursion takes us from snapshots of opportunity (the Euphrates and the Congo) toward constrained (the Nile and the Mississippi). Eventually, we watch the finish of subjection and see opportunity reestablished. The "I" of the poem which is utilized figuratively and not personally; the "I" is connected to every one of the individuals of color across the globe and furthermore every one of the dark people groups ever. Not with standing, the inquiry that remains is the reason should Hughes utilize this general "I"? One answer is a maybe critical one. It might mean exactly the same thing as interminable repeat. Truth be told, Hughes might need to demonstrate that subjugation and difficulty is the thing that is consistently associated with blacks and as blacks are conceived and brought back to life, this bondage is constantly associated with their character and it is something that never disappears. Subsequently, it very well may be an analysis of the norm as well. Another reaction is a positive and hopeful one. Hughes might need to say that since every one of the blacks share a similar encounter, they ought to get joined together." 3 So there is no distinction between Africans in North America, South America, in Asia and Africa. They have a rationale to become joined together and that is the way that they have "known waterways" and their spirit "has developed profound like the streams". This positive reaction bodes well considering the representation of stream and ocean that peruses him clarifies.

CONCLUSION : Langston Hughes was a brilliant Negro poet. His poem is always full value of life. Primarily it described his humanity and his care of his social condition, as Negro or Black American. Most of his own poems are racial in theme and treatment, derived from his race and community experience

especially in his poem “Negro”. In this poem the writer knows the destiny of Black American condition at the time. They got bad treatment of White American who regard Black race is inferior status. Hughes expresses his emotional experiences and makes the reader think about what exactly it was like to live his life during that time. Hughes is Black poet proud to be a Negro. We can know it when we read this poem, Hughes identified himself by saying “I am a Negro”, and then he describes himself and his race as having been a slave, worker, singer and victim who suffered discrimination. This poem is well expressed poem and makes us touched with what he describes all about Africa. It is remembering us the case of discrimination between Africa and American, between blacks and whites. Black American faced discrimination in all aspect of their society at that time like in education, workplaces, and public facilities. Black American did not achieve same equality like White in all aspect of society. White American must dominate and Black is inferior and will remain no social equality in their life. Then he uses simple and understanding words for the diction in his poem, so we can understand easily with the content such as Julius Caesar, George Washington, and the Woolworth Building to show the large role black people played throughout history. It is show us the period when the Black American slaves faced discrimination that often prevented them from public facilities, holding well paying jobs, or getting an education that would help them compete in a white dominated society.

REFERENCE

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